

# Gorilla Express

4 days | Starts/Ends: Kigali



*Head into the lush Rwandan jungle in search of the world's largest primate - the mountain gorilla. Start the trip with a city tour in Kigali and you've got the perfect Rwandan adventure!*

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Kigali - Rwanda's historical capital - city tour including the Memorial Centre (Genocide Museum)
- Ruhengeri - gateway to the Volcanoes National Park
- Volcanoes National Park - home to the endangered mountain gorilla.

### What's Included

- 3 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner
- 3 nights mid range lodges and hotels
- Airport arrival and departure transfer days 1 and 4
- Half day city tour of Kigali
- Transportation in a private 4WD vehicle
- Mountain Gorilla tracking permit
- Services of an experienced local guide/driver and a professional gorilla tracker
- Park entrance fees

### What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture
- Optional activities

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1 : Kigali

Upon arrival into Kigali airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the evening is at leisure. Why not begin exploring Kigali or you can simply relax and enjoy the hotel facilities before your gorilla adventure begins. Located just 10 minutes away from the international airport in the Kimihurura area, the hotel is surrounded by lush picturesque views and cooled by breezes from the hills offering a unique experience of relaxation amidst serene landscapes. The rooms are all luxuriously furnished and the several facilities including a pool, gym and spa ensure that you will lack for nothing while here. **Overnight - Kigali**

### Day 2 : Ruhengeri



Kigali - Ruhengeri. After breakfast, join your driver guide on a cultural and historical City Tour of Kigali including the Memorial Centre and Crafts centres. The country's history dates back centuries and Kigali has been part of it for 100 years. Since becoming Rwanda's capital in 1962, Kigali has become a vibrant African city of 1 million with wide boulevards, an international airport, world-class hotels and restaurants, crafts & curio shops as well as a lively, cosmopolitan population. Once the tour is over, you will be able to enjoy a much-needed lunch at one of the city's many upscale restaurants before beginning your drive to Ruhengeri at the foothills of the Virungas. You will arrive at Mountain Gorilla View Lodge in the late afternoon giving you plenty of time to enjoy your surroundings before sitting down to dinner. This luxurious Lodge is located on the edge of the Volcanoes National Park offering stunning panoramic views of the Virungas. This bush lodge is an oasis of serenity with 25 en-suite guest cottages built in contemporary African design creating a relaxing and refreshing ambiance. In the evenings, the Itorero, local Rwandan cultural dance troupe, spices your stay with memorable Rwandan dances. **Overnight - Ruhengeri - Mountain Gorilla Lodge (B, L, D)**

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## Day 3 : Gorilla Trekking



Ruhengeri - Volcanoes National Park - Kigali. Today the most adventurous part of your Rwandan holiday takes place. After an early breakfast, drive to Ruhengeri and proceed to the Volcanoes National Park HQs to be allocated a gorilla tracking group. 0700 hrs: Briefing by your trackers then drive to the trail head for the start of a truly memorable experience. Our exhilarating trek, in the footsteps of the rare and critically endangered Mountain Gorillas, the largest living primate on earth, starts in the cultivated foothills of the Virungas with stirring views in all directions. As soon as you enter the national park, you will be immersed in the mysterious intimacy of the rainforest alive with colorful bird calls, butterflies and all the other animals that call this park home. As you weave through the forest's lush vegetation, the experienced trackers, who spent their entire lives in or close to this forest, soon bring you up close with the family. Upon sighting the gorillas, you will stay with them for a magical hour as they go about their daily life, feeding, playing, resting; raising their young. Coming face to face with a giant silverback must truly be one of the greatest wildlife experiences on earth! Once back at the park's HQs you may wish to enjoy a meal at one of the local restaurants before driving back to Kigali where you will check into the Lemigo Hotel with dinner on your own account. **Overnight - Kigali (B)**

## Day 4 : Kigali

Kigali. Today marks the end of your visit to Rwanda. After breakfast you will be transferred to international airport in time for your flight.(B)

## The Cost of Gorilla Permits

The Rwandan Government controls the cost of the gorilla permits and has been known

to increase the price without notice. Our Gorilla Express Safari includes the cost of the gorilla permit, which is currently USD\$750. Although we do not anticipate a price increase at present, if the cost of the permit does rise, please note that a supplement will be applicable.

## Gorilla Trekking

Gorilla trekking is a wonderful, unique experience where you're afforded the opportunity to see one of the approximately 700 remaining gentle giants in their natural environment. One needs to bear in mind that they are endangered, wild animals and require a high level of protection, so as to ensure more visitors can enjoy them for generations to come.

The trek starts in the early morning and after border formalities you are transferred to a ranger's station where the trek commences. Your rangers will lead you through the cultivated lands and then into the dense rain forest and as close as is allowed to a gorilla family. The rangers monitor the gorillas on a daily basis and have a fairly good idea of where they are. However, they are free roaming animals, and their sighting cannot be guaranteed. On The Go is a major supplier of gorilla trekkers and as such have a high success rate of actually seeing these beautiful animals. Trekking can take anywhere from 45 minutes to 8 hours and it can be quite strenuous, so a reasonable level of fitness is required. To ensure the gorillas do not get too used to the presence of humans and because they share many of our genes (and are therefore able to catch our diseases); the maximum time permitted to spend with them is 1 hour. You will have plenty of time to watch their activity and to take photographs. The rangers will be able to provide you with a background to the family you are visiting. Once your hour is up, you trek back out of the rain forest to your meeting point

## What to take

You will need to wear comfortable hiking/walking shoes as you'll probably spend a few hours walking to reach the gorillas. You'll be "bushwhacking," into a misty rain forest, so wear a pair of trousers and a long sleeved shirt

to protect yourself from the thick undergrowth and stinging nettles. You may also want to bring along a pair of gloves to protect your hands. We suggest you carry a light rain jacket to protect yourself from getting damp. Most passengers take along a small daypack which contains their water supply for the day, their packed lunch as well as their camera equipment. When you reach the gorillas, you remove your camera from the daypack, which is then stored with one of the rangers until your hour is over. (No flash photography is permitted, so make sure you have a high speed film (400 to 800 ISO) – or you adjust your digital camera's ISO.)

## Health

As gorillas are very sensitive to human diseases, the rangers will not permit anyone with an airborne contagious disease to partake in the trek. Please note this applies especially to common colds and flu. It is also compulsory to have a yellow fever vaccination prior to viewing the gorillas and the rangers will require you to show them your vaccination certificate prior to your trek.

## Other

The decision of the rangers and guides on the trek is final and if they instruct a trekking group to leave prior to the full hour viewing them, then their instruction is to be followed. Their decisions are based in the best interests of the Gorilla families. All instructions regarding to clothing, luggage, photography and behavior by the rangers & guides is to be strictly followed.

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### Passports & Visas

Please ensure that you have at least two blank pages in your passport, plus an additional blank page for each visa/African country you are visiting. If travelling on one of our longer overland safaris we recommend that you have at least 12 blank pages in your passport.

Please also note that your passport must be valid for a minimum of six months from the end date of your trip.

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# Gorilla Express

Any visa information provided in this document is for general guidance purposes only, visa requirements and fees are subject to change. It is essential that you check current entry requirements with each relevant embassy/consulate prior to departure. Visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not of On The Go.

## Booking Your Flights

When booking your departure flight you should allow time at the end of your African safari for any unexpected delays. We recommend that you book your onward flight no earlier than 24 hours after the end of your safari. In the case of our longer overland camping safaris (22 days or more) we advise against making any firm arrangements for at least 48 hours after the scheduled departure date. Your tour leader can help to arrange post tour accommodation locally upon request.

## Allergies/Likes/Dislikes

Whilst all will be done to accommodate everyone, sometimes the choice available is limited as your cook may be making the best of very limited availability, so some flexibility may be required when encountering something you're not particularly fond of or have chosen not to eat as a lifestyle choice. Should you possess allergies which will result in a medical emergency or a life threatening situation then please ensure you speak to your cook on arrival so you can discuss the options available whilst en-route. This will ensure also that they are fully aware of what you can or cannot eat and make adjustments.

## Rwanda Country Guide

### Visas

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Africa.

Visas are not required for passengers from the UK, USA and South Africa. Passengers

from Canada, Australia and New Zealand do require a visa which can be obtained upon arrival for USD60 and is a single entry and valid for stays up to 15 days.

Please note that your Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate must be presented upon arrival in Rwanda in order to be granted entry.

### East Africa Tourist Visa

If you are planning on visiting Uganda and/or Rwanda when travelling to Kenya then you can apply for an East Africa tourist visa which will cover all countries. The visa allows multiple entry into these countries and is valid for 90 days. It can be applied for in advance or upon arrival at Nairobi International Airport.

## Vaccinations

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Rwanda from your local health practitioner and ensure that all you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. Typically the list includes Tetanus, diphtheria, polio, hepatitis A, hepatitis B (for stays over 3 months) and optionally anti-rabies inoculation, typhoid and meningococci.

A Yellow Fever Certificate of Vaccination is required for all people travelling to Rwanda - it must be presented on arrival before entry will be granted.

## Currency

The currency of Rwanda is the Rwandan Franc. The notes for the Rwandan Franc come in denominations of 5000, 2000, 1000, 500 and 100. Coins are in 100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1 franc pieces.

## Time & Voltage

The time in Rwanda is GMT +2. They do not recognise Daylight Saving.

## Climate

In the heart of Africa, fractionally south of the equator, Rwanda's relatively high altitude provides it with a remarkably pleasant tropical highland climate, albeit also with plenty of rain. Temperatures vary considerably between locations depending on their altitude, but very little from month to

month in the same place. In the capital, Kigali, the average daily temperature is about 21°C.

Rwanda's long rainy season lasts from about March to May, when the rain is heavy and persistent. Then from June to mid-September is the long dry season; this is generally the best time to visit if you have the choice.

October to November is a shorter rainy season and it's followed by a short dry season from December to February.

During both of Rwanda's dry seasons, there is often light cloud cover. This helps to moderate the temperatures, but also occasionally brings light rain showers.

## Uganda Country Guide

### Visa

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Africa.

UK, Irish, Australian, New Zealand, USA, Canadian and RSA citizens require a visa for Uganda. This can be obtained upon arrival at all entry and exit points. Currently a 3 month single entry visa costs - US\$50.

Please note that your Yellow Fever Vaccination Certificate must be presented upon arrival in Uganda in order to be granted entry.

### East Africa Tourist Visa

If you are planning on visiting Uganda and/or Rwanda when travelling to Kenya then you can apply for an East Africa tourist visa which will cover all countries. The visa allows multiple entry into these countries and is valid for 90 days. It can be applied for in advance or upon arrival at Nairobi International Airport.

The border crossings we use in Uganda include:

Busia (Kenya/Uganda border)

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## Vaccinations

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Uganda from your local health practitioner and ensure that all you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide diphtheria, hepatitis A, polio, tetanus and typhoid are strongly recommended. Meningitis and hepatitis B are sometimes recommended.

A Yellow Fever Certificate of Vaccination is required for all people travelling to Uganda - it must be presented on arrival before entry will be granted.

Uganda is affected by malaria – we strongly recommend that you take anti-malaria medication. Adequate measures to avoid mosquito bites include: insect repellent, sleeping under a mosquito net and wearing long sleeve clothing and long trousers in the evenings.

## Currency

The currency of Uganda is the Uganda Shilling (UGX).

Notes are in denominations of UGX50,000, 20,000, 10,000, 5,000 and 1,000. Coins are in denominations of UGX500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1.

The import and export of local currency is prohibited. It is possible to change money and use ATMs in large cities. Please note that travellers cheques are not widely accepted and can only be exchanged in Kampala.

## Time & Voltage

Uganda is 3 hours ahead of GMT. Daylight saving time is not observed.

In Uganda the standard voltage is 240V. Primary sockets require a 'Type G' - British BS-1363 type, three pin plug. You will need a voltage converter, and plug adapter in order to use U.S. appliances. We recommend packing a universal adapter.

## Climate

Despite being located on the Equator, Uganda is rather temperate, with the lowlands remaining warm year round and temperatures averaging around 26°C. In the mountain regions, due to the high altitude, it is much

cooler. The climate in Uganda is tropical and the country has two main wet and dry seasons; it is typically dry from December to February and June to August, and wet from March to May and October to November.

## OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

We offer a number of locally operated optional activities and excursions on each of our expeditions. We feel that offering optional excursions affords a greater degree of flexibility, independence and choice to our travellers. To help you budget, below is a selection of optional excursions available on this trip.

### Please note the following:

All prices are in US Dollars and are subject to change. Where activities occur away from your base, there may be an additional transfer cost. Make sure you have \$US dollars with you before you travel to Africa as it is notoriously difficult to get them here.

Victoria Falls activities (if applicable) - must be paid for in US\$ cash (GBP & ZAR also accepted at a lower rate).

Gorilla Trekking (if applicable) - the price varies dependant on where gorilla trek takes place ie Uganda, DRC or Rwanda.

We offer camping excursions in the Serengeti/ Ngorongoro Crater and Okavango Delta.

All optional excursions are offered by 3rd parties and independently of On The Go Tours. They are undertaken at your own risk and On The Go Tours take no responsibility for personal loss/injury caused.

### Kenya

Masai Warrior Dancing US \$20

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